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GENERAL ORDERS, } HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
No. 53. } ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, May 15, 1882.

For the purpose of securing uniformity in selecting the rifle teams, and in conducting the competitions prescribed in General Orders, No. 44, series of 1881, from this office, the following, with the approval of the honorable Secretary of War, is hereby substituted for that order:

I. At every military post the commanding officer will enforce existing orders and regulations on the subject of target practice, and, whenever practicable, will encourage officers and men to hunt for game, for which suitable ammunition will be furnished by the Ordnance Department.

II. There will be three grades for competition and Army prizes:

1st. The Department.
2d. The Division.
3d. The Army.

III. From the reports of the best target firing at posts and camps, and from such other *data* as may be available, the department commander will, annually, cause a selection to be made of the most suitable "marksman" of each company, troop, or battery, and one from each non-commissioned staff or band. The officers and men thus selected will be assembled at some convenient post of his command, in the month of August of each year, to compete for places in the department team of twelve. In these competitions the distance will be two hundred yards standing, three hundred yards kneeling, and six hundred yards lying, in any position within the rules. After such amount of preliminary practice, at the rendezvous, as the department commander may prescribe, the competitions will take place and will extend through three days. On each of these days (not necessarily consecutive) every competitor will fire one complete score of seven shots at each of the prescribed ranges, and a report thereof will be transmitted to the division commander for his information. The twelve marksmen making the highest aggregate scores in these competitions will constitute the department team of twelve, and

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to that marksman making the best aggregate score will be awarded a suitably inscribed gold medal. Two alternates may be added to the team, at the discretion of the department commander. In assembling the competitors, no ordinary exigency of the service, field, or other duty will be allowed to interfere with the representation of every company having a qualified marksman; and commanding officers will forward to the place of competition the descriptive lists of enlisted men, and the qualifying scores, with dates, of *all* marksmen selected for the competitions.

IV..The division commander will assemble the several department teams of twelve, at some convenient post in his division, to compete early in September in like manner for the honor of places upon the division team of twelve and for the prizes herein described: First prize, a suitably inscribed gold medal; to the next three, a suitably inscribed gold medal; and to the remaining eight winning competitors, each a silver medal. In these competitions the firing will be *individual*, by the collective members of all the department twelves, and will not be regarded as a contest of teams, as units, against each other.

V..Finally, every alternate year, beginning in 1882, the General of the Army will assemble, from the entire Army, twelve of the best shots, to compete for the Army prizes. The number to be furnished from each military division and from the Engineer Battalion, together with the time, place, terms of competition, name of director, &c., will be announced in orders. The first prize will be a gold medal, suitably inscribed; the next two, each a gold medal; and the next three, each a silver medal. All prizes herein set forth will be prepared by the Ordnance Department, the expense attending their preparation to be paid for out of the contingent fund of the Army, and become the absolute property of the winners. The medals may be worn on all dress occasions.

VI..In all the foregoing competitions only the service rifle and service ammunition, as issued to the troops, will be used. The aiming notch of the rear-sight slide may be slightly opened or widened, if desired, to accommodate age or individual peculiarities of eyesight, but no other filing or alteration of the regular service sight, as issued by the Ordnance Department, will be permitted.

VII..The marksman's rifle will no longer be issued as contemplated in paragraph 524, revised edition, Laidley's Rifle Firing. Marksman's buttons, in pairs, will be issued as heretofore prescribed, and will remain the property of the marksman.

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VIII..The Ordnance Department will issue from time to time long-range rifles for experimental purposes. These are adapted to a different kind of ammunition, and must not be confounded, in the execution of the foregoing general orders, with the "service rifle" and the "marksman's rifle" (herein referred to), these two having the same calibre and using the same ammunition—the last distinguished by its different form, greater cost, and superior sights.

IX..Ordinary signaling being inconvenient during these competitions, a sufficient number of telephones will be furnished for the ranges by the Signal Corps, and the Quartermaster's Department will supply all the necessary materials for constructing butts, firing-stands, &c.

X..As a further means of cultivating the individuality of marksmen, skirmish matches may also be conducted at the annual contests, under the orders of the department and division commanders. "Team" firing being useful as giving valuable lessons when a united body of men are required to work together, in action, for a specific purpose, the department teams of twelve, after the conclusion of the regular division contests, may be permitted to compete, as organized units, against each other, under the orders of the division commanders; and, in their discretion, division commanders may also arrange matches over longer ranges, in which the use of the marksman's rifle and the Springfield long-range rifle may be permitted, together with the special and experimental ammunition on hand for use. For all the foregoing contests the Ordnance Department will issue the necessary arms and ammunition upon duly approved requisitions.

XI..Hereafter, in the regular monthly target practice, not more than fifteen shots will be fired by any man, on any day, at any one distance. A score will consist of not *less* than five consecutive shots, but the score must not be computed by selecting *any* five consecutive shots, out of the whole number fired by the man, at the same time and distance; they must be divided regularly, as the first five, second five, &c.

GENERAL RULES FOR COMPETITORS AT THE PRESCRIBED DEPARTMENT AND DIVISION CONTESTS.

Immediately before the commencement of the contest, the duly authorized competitors will, by lot, be assigned targets and order of firing. Each will be furnished with score-cards upon which his number, distance, day, hour, and target will be entered. No application on the part of a competitor, for any alteration in his lot thus determined, will be enter-

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tained. No "alternate" will be allowed to compete in the place of any marksman, unless the latter be unable, by sickness, to be present, which fact, when practicable, must be duly set forth by a surgeon's certificate.

The competition will commence at two hundred yards, each competitor firing at the target and in the order stated on his score-card, the odd number of each pair taking his place on the right, at the firing point, and firing first; the pair firing alternately until each man has finished his score at that distance. Firing will be continued in a similar manner at three hundred and six hundred yards.

No sighting shots will be allowed in any competition, but targets will be assigned, at which competitors may practice at any time, provided such practice does not interfere with their presence at the designated time at the firing point to which they may have been assigned.

Rifles may be cleaned only between scores.

If practicable, commissioned officers will act as scorers, and will take their places at the firing point directly in rear of the men firing. Spectators and others, not competitors, will not be permitted to hold any communication with the scorers. All competitors, when not firing, will take their places in rear of their respective firing points, at a distance designated by the officer in charge of the competition.

At the competitions for Army prizes, no "coaching" or unnecessary communication of any kind with those actually firing will be allowed.

Competitors will wear the prescribed fatigue dress, with belt, of their grade in the Army.

Skirmishers' competitions by division and department teams, when restricted to the service rifle, should be confined to ranges from six hundred to two hundred yards and to target "B."

Skirmish competitions—in which the Springfield long-range rifles, authorized in paragraph 8, may be used with any ammunition—will be encouraged, and should extend to ranges of eight hundred, nine hundred, and one thousand yards.

Skirmishers are not restricted as to position in firing at any distance.

Skirmish competitions or matches between *organized teams* partake necessarily of the individual character, and in order to insure strict fairness and equal conditions for all, the several lines maneuvered should be

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composed of equal numbers from each team competing, and the firing be continued until all have fired.

The director or officer in charge, accompanied by a trumpeter, maneuvers the line as in his discretion may seem best, in quick or double time, forward or retiring, using at all times the tactical commands, and allowing such time for halts and firings as he may judge best calculated to make the exercises as nearly as possible resemble actual skirmishing in front of the enemy, care being taken that no competitor has sufficient time to fire his twenty shots before retiring from the firing point nearest the target.

File-closers, to repeat commands, report irregularities, &c., will, when required, be designated by the director.

Competitors in skirmish contests (not more than three at any one target) are formed in line at the six hundred yards firing points, with twenty cartridges each, in boxes or belts, and at the command or signal "*Skirmishers*, ATTENTION," load their rifles. At the command or signal "*Forward*, MARCH," the line advances until the signal "*Skirmishers*, HALT," when the sights are adjusted to the estimated distances. At the command "*Commence* FIRING," each competitor fires at least one shot. *This rule is general.* Firing ceases at the command "*Cease* FIRING," after which no competitor fires until the command "*Commence* FIRING" is again given.

Having approached sufficiently near the two hundred yards firing point, the signal "*To the rear*, MARCH," is given, when the maneuvering to the rear and firing will continue until twenty shots per man have been fired. The rifles are carried on the right shoulder when maneuvering to the rear.

The number of halts made in advancing and retiring are determined by the director, and must not be announced to competitors.

Upon returning to the six hundred yards firing point, the signal "*Cease* FIRING," is sounded, and repeated *twice*, when the markers examine the targets and signal the total hits upon each, as follows: 1st, bull's-eyes; 2d, centres; 3d, inners; and 4th, outers.

PENALTIES.

Five points will be deducted for each failure to fire at least one shot at each signal "commence firing" (unless his twenty shots shall have been already expended by the competitor); for each shot fired after the signal "cease firing," and for each shot in excess found to have hit any target.

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Competitors firing on the wrong target may, in the discretion of the officer in charge, be debarred from further competitions.

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL SHERMAN:

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL:

Assistant Adjutant General.

NARA RG104, Entry 1, Box 126

General Orders,
No. 53 }

Headquarters of the Army,
Adjutant General's Office,
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